

VZCZCXRO0456  
OO RUEHROV  
DE RUEHJM #2154 3311522  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 261522Z NOV 08  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3392  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002154

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL/RAMCHAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/26/2018  
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#)  
SUBJECT: PA PREPARES BETHLEHEM SECURITY PLAN TO SUPPORT  
CHRISTMAS TOURISM

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) PA National Security Forces (NSF) commander MG Thiab Mustafa Ali (Abu al-Fatah) told PolOff/PolFSN November 26 that PA security forces will begin a Christmas-period deployment in early December that will continue through early ¶2009. He said the operation will rotate 800-1000 NSF, police, and Presidential Guard troops into the Bethlehem Governorate, but not all will stay in Bethlehem for the whole Christmas period. MG Ali said the security situation in Bethlehem does not require a large-scale effort, and the scale of PASF operations will be much smaller than in Nablus, Jenin and Hebron. He said the main focus of operations will be on facilitating tourism and preventing crime or attacks against tourists.

¶2. (C) MG Ali said the operation will be similar to last year, except that more police will be required to handle an expected increase in tourists. Increased forces in Bethlehem will also allow progress on the PA's secondary goal of conducting quick arrest raids in Area B towns outside Bethlehem as specific intelligence on wanted persons develops. He said several wanted criminals are hiding in Taqu'a and other villages where IDF restrictions make it hard for the NSF to operate.

¶3. (SBU) NSF staff officers said PASF returned an Israeli citizen, who had entered Bethlehem surreptitiously, to the IDF DCL on November 26. These officers said they frequently find Israelis in Bethlehem. When this occurs, they detain the person, notify the IDF, and immediately transport the Israeli to the DCL for handover.

WALLES